

What is claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing contact sheets, comprising the steps of:
providing at least one elastic, electrically conductive sheet;
forming an electrically conductive member from each said at least one electrically conductive sheet, each said electrically conductive member including a plurality of contact members aligned in a first direction in a predetermined arrangement and joined to one another by a plurality of linking portions;
providing at least one elastic, electrically insulative base sheet having a plurality of openings formed therein in a predetermined pattern corresponding to said predetermined arrangement of said contact members of said electrically conductive member;
positioning and securing said electrically conductive member to at least one surface of said at least one base sheet such said contact members are positioned in said openings; and
subjecting said contact members to a breaking off process to sever said linking portions and separate adjacent contact members from each other;
wherein opposing severed faces of said linking portions are formed during said severing part of said subjecting step; and
wherein the position of said linking portions prior to severing is such that said opposing severed faces are separated from each other.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said breaking off process of said subjecting step comprises a bending process to form contact portions having a predetermined configuration extending from said openings of said at least one base sheet.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said linking portions are defined by notches positioned between adjacent contact members of said electrically conductive member.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of plating said electrically conductive member.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein said plating is performed before said subjecting step.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein a width of said linking portion is in a range of 0.3 to 2 times a thickness of said linking portion.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein said electrically conductive sheet comprises beryllium copper.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of forming an electrically conductive member from each said at least one electrically conductive sheet is performed by at least one method selected from the group consisting of punching, etching or laser processing.
9. The method of claim 3, wherein said step of forming said electrically conductive members from each said at least one electrically conductive sheet comprises forming a contact member base portion interposed between a contact member securing portion and a contact member beam portion.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein said step of forming said electrically conductive members from each said at least one electrically conductive sheet further comprises forming said notches defining said linking portions between portions of said contact member securing portions and said contact member beam portions of adjacent contact members.
11. The method of claim 9, wherein said step of forming said contact member beam portion further comprises forming a pair of contact member beam legs

extending having a width that extends in one of said first direction and a second direction that is substantially perpendicular to said first direction and a length that extends in the other one of said first and said second directions.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said width of each said contact member beam legs in said second direction is widest at a respective first end thereof proximate a first end of said contact member base portion.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said width of said contact member beam legs in said first direction is widest at a respective first end thereof proximate a first end of said contact member base portion.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said first direction is a diagonal direction such that said predetermined pattern comprises a diagonally interconnected network arrangement of said contact members in said electrically conductive member and a corresponding diagonal network arrangement of said openings of said base sheet.